

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 13, 2007. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 1-5, 8, 10 and 11 are amended to more clearly distinguish the present invention over the prior art. Thus, claims 1-11 are currently pending in the present application.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised in order to make a number of minor clarifying and other editorial amendments. Due to the nature of the revision, a substitute specification and abstract has been prepared. No new matter has been added. Also enclosed is a "marked-up" copy of the original specification and abstract to show the changes that have been incorporated into the substitute specification and abstract. The enclosed copy is entitled "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Next, on pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected as being anticipated by Kodama et al. (US Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0007868). It is submitted that the present invention, as defined in independent claim 1, clearly distinguishes over the Kodama reference for the following reasons.

Initially, it is noted that the Kodama reference corresponds to JP 9-323702A, which is discussed in the BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION in the present application (see paragraph [0004]). As explained therein, Kodama discloses an elastic restraint means for engaging with a gear of a rotor to restrain inadvertent rotation of a rotor during removal of a

tablet cassette from a support base. Also disclosed is a release means for releasing engagement of the restraint means with the rotor during mounting of the tablet cassette.

In particular, Kodama discloses a gear stopper 43 capable of engaging gear 38 in the feeder vessel when the feeder vessel 36 is detached from motor base 32. The stopper is disengaged from the gear when the feeder vessel 36 is mounted. The gear stopper is biased against gear 38 by spring 44. The Kodama arrangement allows gear stopper 43 to engage gear 38 to prevent rotor 39 from rotating, thereby preventing tablets from falling out of feeder vessel 36. However, with the gear stopper of Kodama, there is a point in time in which the rotor can freely rotate during mounting and dismounting operations of the tablet cassette. Thus, there is the possibility that the rotor will rotate due to impact, thereby causing a tablet held in the pocket portion of the rotor to appear in the discharge port and be inadvertently discharged (see paragraph [0006] of the present originally-filed specification).

In order to eliminate this disadvantage, the tablet cassette of the present invention includes a press member that can be pressed when the tablet cassette is held to permit the cassette to be mounted on the mount base, and a rotor reversing member for reversing the rotor by a predetermined quantity in conjunction with pressing of the press member.

The Examiner takes the position that the gear 38 corresponds to the claimed rotor reversing member. However, the gear does not function to reverse rotation of the rotor, and clearly does not cause the rotor to rotate in response to pressing of the gear stopper 43 (press member). Note that the gear stopper is biased against the gear by spring 44. Should the Examiner maintain the position that the gear operates to reverse rotation of the rotor, then the

Examiner is respectfully requested to identify the portion of the Kodama specification that describes this function.

Clearly, the Kodama cassette does not have a press member that is pressed when the tablet cassette is held nor a rotor reversing member operable in conjunction with the pressing of the press member. Therefore, Kodama cannot anticipate claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as suggested by the Examiner. Furthermore, the Kodama cassette cannot function in the same way as the cassette defined in claim 1 of the present invention.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 13, 2007